

# Resources

FALL 2023

U P D A T E

## Education Edition

Save the date! Saturdays are continuing with a cornucopia of topics at the LandUse Learning Center in Riverside. This season includes:

### 2023

- Sept. 2 **Rainwater Harvesting in Barrels** with Christine and Michael Lampe  
**Intro to Food Preservation** by Master Food Preservers
- Sept. 30 **How to Preserve Your Summer-End Harvest** by UC Master Food Preservers
- Oct. 7 **Fruit Tree Pruning** with Tom Spellman of Dave Wilson Nursery
- Nov. 4 **Invasive Plants and Native Landscaping** with Dr. Chris McDonald, UC Cooperative Extension  
**Wreath Making with Native Plants** by RCRCND Naturalist Michele Felix-Derbarmdiker
- Dec. 2 **Hydroponics** with Master Gardener Michael Fisher

### 2024

- Jan. 6 **Mushrooms: Their Role in Nature and Home Propagation** with Dr. Hung Doan, UC Cooperative Extension
- Feb. 3 **Scion Exchange and Backyard Fruit Growing, Grafting Workshop** by the California Rare Fruit Growers
- March 2 **Lawn Alternatives** by Audrey Pongs of Greenbelt Growers
- April 6 **Integrated Pest Management and Asian Citrus Psyllid Control** with Dr. David Morgan, CA Dept. of Food and Agriculture

Many thanks to our previous season of speakers: Barbara Croonquist, Raquel Falco, Dr. Fred Roth, Dr. Hung Doan, Susan Krings, Christine Lampe, Susan Forgrave, Jake Vogenberg, Kathy Swanson, Linda Mullins and Kevin Sims.

Most programs begin at 10 a.m. at 4500 Glenwood Dr. in Riverside. An *Ask a Master Gardener* booth will be open from 9 a.m. to noon. For more information, contact us at [llc@rcrcd.org](mailto:llc@rcrcd.org) or (951) 683-7691 ext. 207. More events at: <https://www.rcrcd.org/events> .

For a history of past educational programs, please see:

<https://www.rcrcd.org/files/846e03041/2023+education+program+summary+web.pdf> .



Tom Spellman demonstrated fruit tree pruning at the 2022 workshop.



Lisa Wright of the California Rare Fruit Growers coordinated a free Scion Exchange last spring.

# Sycamore Creek Interpretive Center Returns

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sycamore Creek Interpretive Center (SCIC) has been slow to reopen. However, we are back and offering programs to visitors both new and old. *Story Time Among the Sycamores* for young children will continue the second week of each month. A rattlesnake avoidance training for dogs is in the works for the fall. We are also excited to announce Guest Speaker Saturdays, which will occur at 10 a.m., usually on the fourth Saturday of most months:

- September 23 **Lawn Replacement and Alternatives** by Audrey Pongs from Greenbelt Growers
- October 28 **Fall Gardening Strategies for an Abundant Harvest by Lisa Wright Plant Sale**
- November 18 **Climate-Adapted Trees & Care: Selection, Watering, Pests and Prevention** by the Inland Urban Forest Council

Worried you might miss an event?

- Join our site email list by contacting us at [scic@rcrcd.org](mailto:scic@rcrcd.org)
- Follow us on Instagram at [syc\\_creek\\_interpretive\\_center](https://www.instagram.com/syc_creek_interpretive_center) and/or on Facebook at SCICTV, or
- Sign up for our periodic agency newsletter online at [RCRCD.org](https://www.rcrcd.org).

The Sycamore Creek Interpretive Center is located at 11875 Indian Truck Trail, Temescal Valley, 92883.



Naturalist Michele Felix-Derbarmdiker promoted the planting of milkweed for monarch butterflies at the Temescal Valley Town Hall coordinated by County Supervisor Karen Spiegel April 19, 2023.

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## Capture Change with Your Phone

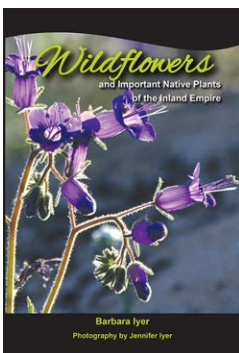
Contribute to science and watch our garden shift with the seasons. Flowers to seeds, willow leaves green to gold to gone, blue skies to gray. All you have to do is snap a photo at our new Chronolog station along the LandUse Learning Center trail and email it. You can watch as the photos are compiled into an ever-changing time lapse video at <https://www.chronolog.io/site/RCD101> .

The demonstration garden is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily except holidays, and is located at 4500 Glenwood Dr. in Riverside.

For information contact us at [llc@rcrcd.org](mailto:llc@rcrcd.org) or (951) 683-7691, ext. 207.



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## Start Planning Your Fall Plantings

*Wildflowers and Important Native Plants of the Inland Empire* offers gardening and identification tips. The book highlights more than 80 species and includes Native American, landscape, and wildlife uses. For more information, see [rcrcd.org/books](https://www.rcrcd.org/books) .



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California Conservation Corps (CCC) member Laura Airo helped install an irrigation system to the raised beds that were created by the CCC crew.

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## Thank You CCCs for Coming to the Rescue!

The California Conservation Corps (CCC) has partnered with RCRCDD on a number of important projects this past year, including habitat plantings, propagating native plants, and most recently repairing the badly weathered bridge that crosses over the LandUse Learning Center's (LLC) native fish stream. The CCC is a California agency that provides young adults a unique and challenging work experience in emergency response, energy, forestry, and/or conservation while they learn and develop their job skills.

In August, we were fortunate to have a site visit by Director Bruce Saito and managers Angel Lizaola and Rhody Soria. We greatly appreciate the time, work and funding that was brought to help advance RCRCDD's conservation work, including the use of a specialized steamer that sterilizes soil to prevent the spread of pathogens in nursery stock.

Corps members, under the direction of the incredibly effective Project Coordinator Pamela Knott, repaired the hazardous bridge, then constructed raised beds and two composters for the LLC's new community garden. In addition, they installed 40 acres of overhead irrigation and planted approximately 15,000 native plants at our Corona Foothill project site.

Many thanks to Corps members Mya Covarrubias, Laura Airo, Kelvin Lopez, Joanne Oliva, Mary Ruiz, and Yuritzi Renteria who provided onsite support for a variety of conservation projects and to savvy Transition Navigator Jessica Quiñonez Barboza.

## Permaculture Design Training

RCRCDD will be hosting a permaculture class and workshop on Second Saturdays 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. from September, 2023 through August, 2024. Students will be able to choose monthly classes, or complete the entire year to earn a permaculture design certificate. The introductory class on September 9 will be free. Over the course of a year, students will create their own designs and help develop a permaculture garden at the LandUse Learning Center. The course will be taught by a team of certified permaculture designers led by Susan Krings of Diverse Habitat Garden Ecological Enterprise (DiHG Eco-Prise). Find costs and more info at: <https://dihgeco.org/home/permaculture-design-course-riverside-california/>.



# Opportunities for Students



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Visitors to our sites can check out themed backpacks for fun learning activities.

The Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District provides a variety of educational programs and services, including free conservation education materials for schools, youth groups, and homeschooling families who live or work within our district boundaries (Map: <https://www.rcrcd.org/district-boundary-map>). Find educational programs and resources on our website at [www.rcrcd.org/educational-programs](http://www.rcrcd.org/educational-programs).

Visit RCRCD's two educational sites available for field trips:

- The LandUse Learning Center (LLC) in Riverside: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNjFD2e0GM4&t=5s>
- The Sycamore Creek Interpretive Center (SCIC) in Temescal Valley: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1vY9f75Q&t=5s>.

Learn about resource management at the LLC, a demonstration of sustainable practices for the three main land uses of SoCal: native habitats, urban areas, and agriculture. The LLC is open daily from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Personal tours are usually available, or you can access a self-guided tour on your smart phone or pad at <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/a88a54e1e0fb4bddb6bc82cb18926771>.

## Mini-Grants for School Conservation Projects

RCRCD provides garden funding of up to \$500 per teacher for schools within district boundaries: <https://www.rcrcd.org/district-boundary-map>. Examples include creating school gardens, planting trees, building compost piles, protecting slopes, and growing native plants to help pollinators like hummingbirds and monarch butterflies.

Applications are accepted throughout the year. For more information and inspiration go to <https://www.rcrcd.org/mini-grants-and-school-gardens>, stop by our LandUse Learning Center demonstration garden, or contact Resource Educator Jenny Iyer at [iyer@rcrcd.org](mailto:iyer@rcrcd.org) or (951) 683-7691, ext. 226.

## Envirothon Gears Up for 2024

The Envirothon is a natural resource education program for high school students. Teams study throughout the year, then join with participants from all over California to compete in five disciplines: Forestry, Wildlife, Aquatics, Soils, and a current topic. Students are challenged to answer written questions and then work as a team to develop and present on a current environmental topic.

The 2023 event brought 15 teams from California high schools to compete in the one-day event. Resource professionals from the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Resource Conservation Districts, U.S. Forest Service, and UC Agriculture and Natural Resources facilitated the competition at the Wind Wolves Preserve west of Bakersfield.

RCRCD offers training and resources to help prepare teams for the spring competition. Find out more at: [caenvirothon.com](http://caenvirothon.com), [envirothon.org](http://envirothon.org), <https://www.facebook.com/groups/146717035350309/>, or contact Erin Snyder at [Snyder@RCRCd.org](mailto:Snyder@RCRCd.org) and (951) 683-7691, ext. 207.



Envirothon land judging in 2019.

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# and Teachers of All Ages

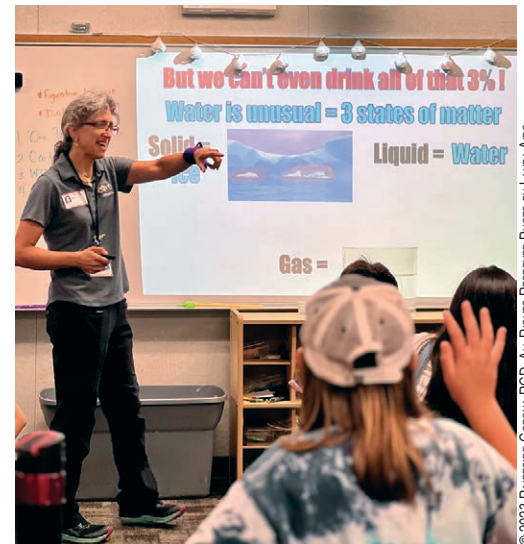
## Corona Water Education

Do you teach in Corona, and are you looking for ways to engage your students in learning about water? The City of Corona's Utilities Department will provide a free presentation by one of RCRCD's resource educators. The water education program explains:

- simple ways to conserve water and why it is important
- where the City of Corona gets its water
- storm water pollutants and how we can reduce them.

Students learn to reduce the amount of pollutants that enter our storm drain system that flows to waterways (washes, creeks, arroyos) and ultimately to the Santa Ana River and ocean. Since people often unknowingly generate the largest amount of storm water pollution, we can be the largest part of the solution. Educating students about these concepts helps to ensure that future generations will understand the importance of water as an essential resource.

RCRCD's resource educator is available to visit Corona school sites to conduct hands-on activities and provide free educational materials. To schedule a program, please contact Jenny Iyer at [iyer@RCRCD.org](mailto:iyer@RCRCD.org) or (951) 683-7691, Ext. 226.



Resource Educator Jennifer Iyer conducts programs for Corona schools.

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During their field trip, the 2023 California Naturalist class removed invasive weeds at the Bonaminio Park alkali meadow.

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## Become a Certified Naturalist

The next Cal Nat class will be a hybrid (Online Wednesdays 6-8 P.M. plus Saturday field trips) and is planned for January 17 through March 23, 2024. To find local course information, see this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IcLm8dnpCj4> and visit our website at <https://www.rcrcd.org/california-naturalist-program>.

More information and registration for this University of California training can be found at <https://www.rcrcd.org/california-naturalist-program> and <https://calnat.ucanr.edu/>.

## Educator Development

RCRCD offers teacher training in environmental education (EE) programs periodically, such as for Project Learning Tree and Project WILD. Erin Snyder will be conducting a Project WET training on September 30: <https://www.rcrcd.org/2023-09-30-project-wet-training>. Teachers can also request access to virtual education programs about water or pollinators that include instructional videos, curriculum and resources.

Organizations such as the Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (AEOE), North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), and the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) offer trainings and certifications. The Environmental Education Collaborative of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties conducts an annual symposium and provides an Environmental Learning Resources Guide with listings of non-formal EE providers at <https://enviroedcollaborative.com/resources/>. You can download the guide, search the listings online, or use the interactive map to find local programs.



# College Students Dig In, Make an Impact

by Jennifer Iyer

Six UC Riverside students finished their eight-month College Corps internships at RCRCDC this summer.

Climate Action fellows Melita Kyritsi Loper, Brianna Lopez, Rosita Martin and Carlos Penalzoza helped in education, nursery, and habitat roles. Janet Lei and Jackeline Armendariz focused on food insecurity-related work mostly in the LandUse Learning Center's edible garden and agricultural area.

Since fall 2022, fellows have: led crafts, assisted visitors, painted murals, filled and distributed crop boxes, helped design displays, spread mulch and compost over 1.5 acres, planted and maintained native and edible plants, picked and boxed more than 5,000 fruits for distribution for food banks and the public, weeded and maintained monarch habitat, started a seed library, assisted with weed eradication and irrigation system installation at restoration projects, and more.

Their hard work will continue to bloom and make a difference in our garden, restoration sites and our community. *Many thanks!*



Artist Melita and her underground soil creation.



Climate Action fellow Carlos helped educate visitors.

# Volunteers Help Save Monarchs

RCRCDC manages 2 acres of Monarch foraging and breeding habitat in the Greenbelt region of Riverside. The habitat provides native milkweed and nectar sources necessary for Monarch butterfly survival. Unfortunately, our wet winter also created a jungle of weeds at the habitat planting. Volunteers jumped into the thick of things and helped clear away several impacted areas. Their hard work will allow the native plants to flourish, further supporting our local pollinators. For Earth Day in April, employees from two local companies offered up their time to help the imperiled Western Monarch. RCRCDC extends a warm thank you to employees from KFRG radio at 95.1 FM and the Amazon Gives Back group.



KFRG radio staff weeded the Monarch habitat, hosted an interview, and ran public service announcements to raise awareness about Monarch butterflies. Special thanks to radio personality Vicki Pepper (front, kneeling) for making this happen.

If you are interested in volunteering at our Greenbelt Monarch Habitat, please contact the project manager at [Felix-Derbarmdiker@rcrcd.org](mailto:Felix-Derbarmdiker@rcrcd.org). To learn more about RCRCDC's volunteer opportunities, please see <https://www.rcrcd.org/volunteer-opportunities>.



# It All Starts With a Seed

## The Process and Importance of Seed Collection

by Laura Airo, California Conservation Corps

One of the many ways the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD) supports the local natural environment is through its careful seed collection process. Plants play a crucial role in maintaining Earth's ecological balance as a food source of many species and by performing the critical task of purifying the air. The objective is to collect the seeds of California native plants that best support the growth of their populations so they are better able to outcompete non-native and invasive plant species.

Nursery manager Ernesto Alvarado coordinates the seed collection process with a hike, a GPS device, and most importantly, permits, which help manage seed resources in a responsible way. In early May 2023, the seeds of early onion (*Allium praecox*) were primed by nature for harvesting. Throughout the hike, Ernesto reminded us of key points: never take more than 10% of material from a single plant, and diversify your seed collection by locating the same plant in different areas.

After collection, the seeds were labeled with the collection location and set out in the sun to dry. Seeds were then cleaned of excess plant material and insects with practices such as sieving and blowing. The last step included storing the seeds in a refrigerated unit.

This process leads to Ernesto's abundant nursery where most of the plants are grown for habitat restoration projects. Proper seed collection safeguards the interconnected system of our natural environment, ensuring the survival of many native plant species and reducing the risk of extinction for animals that depend on these plants. This work helps Ernesto and RCRCD meet their goals of having a diverse native plant collection in the nursery and supporting California's native flora.



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## Seed Library

UC College Corps fellows Janet and Jackeline restored the Seed Library. Once again, people can share or pickup seeds from the Seed Library at the LandUse Learning Center. Stop in and check it out.

## Love Native Plants?

The local chapter of the California Native Plant Society will be holding its Fall Plant Sale November 4, 2023. They often meet Third Saturdays at RCRCD's Building F. For more information about the sale and their activities visit <https://www.riverside-sanbernardino.cnps.org/>.



**Riverside-Corona  
Resource Conservation District**

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**Michele Felix-Derbardmiker** Ext. 218  
Naturalist-SCIC

**NATURAL RESOURCES  
CONSERVATION SERVICE**

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**LandUse Learning Center**

**Ask a Master Gardener** 9 a.m. - noon  
First Saturdays of each month

**Saturday Programs**

**September 2** *Rainwater Harvesting in Barrels* 10 a.m.  
*Introduction to Food Preservation* 12 p.m.

**September 30** *How to Preserve Your Summer Harvest* 10 a.m.

**October 7** *Fruit Tree Pruning* 10 a.m.

**November 4** *Invasive Plants and Native Landscaping* 10 a.m.  
*Wreath Making with Native Plants* 12:30 p.m.

**December 2** *Hydroponics* 10 a.m.

**January 6** *Mushrooms: Their Role in Nature and Home Propagation* 10 a.m.

**Permaculture Certification Course**

Second Saturdays September, 2023 through August, 2024 from 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.  
See page 3.

**Project WET (Water Educator Today) Training**

September 30, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. See page 5.

**California Native Plant Society Plant Sale**

November 4 • <https://www.riverside-sanbernardino.cnps.org/>

**Sycamore Creek Interpretive Center**

**Story Time Among the Sycamores**

Second Week Friday or Saturday at 10 a.m.

September 9 • October 13 • November 11

To register, email [scic@rcrcd.org](mailto:scic@rcrcd.org)

**Saturday Speaker Series** 10 a.m. • Free

**September 23** *Lawn Replacement and Alternatives*

**October 28** *Fall Gardening Strategies for an Abundant Harvest*

**November 18** *Climate Adapted Trees and Care*



Open 7 days a week,  
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Closed holidays.



RCRCD serves parts of western Riverside & San Bernardino Counties; areas surrounding and portions of: Riverside, Corona, Norco, Grand Terrace, Colton, Reche Canyon, Temescal Canyon, Gavilan Hills, Highgrove, Woodcrest. All RCRCD programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, national origin, religion, age, gender, or orientation.

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